

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 /081 W
-----110858 301628Z /47

P 311520Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5929
INFO AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L YAOUNDE 3212

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, EG, SP, VT
SUBJ: EQUATORIAL GUINEA: MASIE MOVES AGAINST CATHOLIC CHURCH

1. I HAVE JUST LEARNED FROM SPANISH CHARGE JUSTE AND PAPAL
PRO NONCE MONSEIGNEUR UHAC THAT MASIE LAST WEEK CLOSED LAST
OF CATHOLIC CHURCHES REMAINING OPEN (BELIEVED TO BE ONE IN
BATA AND TWO OR THREE ON MASIE NGUEMA ISLAND) AND HAS SINCE
ARRESTED REMAINING SIX SPANISH PRIESTS. THEY ALLEDGEDLY BEING
HELD FOR 4 MILLION EKUELE RANSOM (APPROXIMATELY \$57,000).
AMOUNT WILL PROBABLY BE PAID BY EITHER SPANISH GOVERNMENT
OR VATICAN.

2. COMMENT: THESE LATEST INCIDENTS MAY BRING TO AN END
WHAT HAS BEEN ALMOST CONTINUAL HARASSMENT OF CHURCH. LIFE
PRESIDENT MASIE HAS REPEATEDLY THREATENED TO CLOSE CHURCHES,
CONVERT THEM TO COCOA WAREHOUSES OR PARTY MEETING HALLS, INSISTS
HIS PICTURE BE HUNG NEXT TO OR INSTEAD OF CHRIST AND ARRESTED
AND HELD FOR RANSOM BOTH PRIESTS AND NUNS. HE BELIEVES CHURCH
COMPETES FOR LOYALTY OF POPULATION AND THAT EXPATRIATE
PRIESTS SOURCE OF INFORMATION LEAKING OUT ABOUT CONDITIONS
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WITHIN EQUATORIAL GUINEA.

3. WE WILL SUBMIT FOLLOW-UP REPORTS AS WARRANTED.
SMYTHE

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NNN

*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

Message Attributes

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Disposition History: n/a
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